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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 003611

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH URGE FURTHER GROUNDWORK ON BURMA DRAFT

REF: A. STATE 83693 B. 2005 PARIS 7392 C. 2005 PARIS
7953

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Bruce Turner.
Reasons 1.4b,d

¶1. (C) Summary: Embassy reviewed the draft resolution and talking points with French MFA, which confirmed its backing for the USG initiative to raise Burma within the Security Council (Ref A). IO DAS-Equivalent Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel observed May 26 that it was imperative to capitalize on the Burma visit of U/SYG Gambari. IO Desk Officer Benoit Guidee contacted poloff May 30 to temper the French message of support with a warning that there was a need for further groundwork among Council members, particularly Latin Americans, before actually circulating the draft text. Better to have the nine votes in hand first, which did not yet seem the case. External pressures would determine African positions in the Council, he noted, while warning that the French embassy in Beijing believed Chinese views on the subject remained inflexible despite recently more muted rhetoric. End Summary.

¶2. (C) IO DAS-Equivalent Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel on May 26 observed it was imperative to capitalize on the Burma visit of U/SYG Gambari. He underscored the necessity to name a successor to former UN Envoy Raizali as soon as possible -- the key element France sought in any draft resolution. Simon-Michel added that the MFA had shared this view directly with Gambari during the latter's stop-over in Paris earlier last week. Simon-Michel added that Political Director Laboulaye had hosted a dinner for Gambari, who also met separately with Christophe Farnaud, the diplomatic advisor to PM Villepin.

¶3. (C) IO Desk Officer Benoit Guidee contacted poloff May 30 to temper the French message of support with a warning that there was a need for further groundwork among Council members, particularly Latin Americans, before actually circulating the draft text. Better to have the nine votes in hand first, which did not yet seem the case, he advised. Asked about where African UNSC members now stood on Burma, Guidee recalled how France had intervened at USG request in October 2005 to try to solidify Benin's position in the face of Algerian and other pressure (Refs B, C). African SC members, he observed, had "no religion on the subject of Burma" and would chart their positions according to external factors. China, moreover, remained inflexible, despite what the French embassy in Beijing considered to be a somewhat more muted tone in its declarations on Burma. (Bio Note: Guidee's last overseas tour was in Beijing.)

¶4. (C) Praising USG leadership in pushing SC review of Burma, Guidee nonetheless asked what the current objective was now that Gambari would deliver his briefing? Talking at the SC was not a goal by itself, he offered. He suggested

the need to a) ratchet up pressure on Burma's protectors (including not only China but also ASEAN members, even Japan), and b) to expedite appointment of a successor to former UN Special Envoy Razali.

Nuts and Bolts Drafting Advice

15. (C) Guidee welcomed the initial draft but suggested it would be better if limited in scope to "indisputable subjects," for instance human rights violations, the refugee problem, lack of cooperation with the United Nations, the rebuff of UN Human Rights Rapporteur Pinheiro, the naming of a new UN Special Envoy, and the role for Asean. He questioned the appropriateness of the stock preambular reference to resolution 1308 on HIV/AIDs, which properly addresses HIV/AIDs in relation to UN peacekeepers and not the calamity generally. Guidee also relayed a personal request from MFA IO DAS-Equivalent for Human Rights Beatrice Le Fraper for explicit condemnation in the first draft circulated of Burma's refusal to meet with Human Rights Rapporteur Pinheiro, even if such language was unlikely to survive during Council negotiations.

16. (C) Comment: The extension of Aung San Suu Kyi's detention intervened between the conversations with DAS-Equivalent Simon-Michel and Desk Officer Guidee. The MFA IO bureau remains supportive, in principle, of advancing the issue of Burma in the Council, but with an evident caveat, after the latest development, that precipitating a confrontation without the votes in hand may only hurt the cause.

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